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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTANI DELEGATION STUDIES ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF
TRAFFICKING IN ITALY

11. SUMMARY: In an effort to improve Kazakhstan's ability to protect victims of trafficking in persons, INL sent a Kazakhstani interagency delegation to Rome to study the work of the Italian government and Italian NGOs. The delegation -- representatives of the Ministries of Justice, Internal Affairs, Labor and Social Protection, and Information and Culture, as well as a local NGO -- praised the information they had received and what they had learned in Italy. The Vice Minister of Justice emphasized the importance of inter-agency coordination, and pledged his ministry would take the lead in Kazakhstan to replicate Italian models, including working more closely with NGOs. END SUMMARY.

BACKGROUND

12. In 2007, the Government of Kazakhstan significantly improved its efforts to prosecute and convict traffickers -- specifically, it recorded a 1900% improvement compared to the previous year. However, the annual Trafficking in Persons Report identified victim assistance and protection as continuing weaknesses. Kazakhstan has expressed the political will to fund victim-assistance programs and support shelters, but it does not have sufficient expertise in these areas. In several meetings with representatives of the Embassy's Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL), government officials have requested assistance from Tier 1 countries with effective victim-assistance programs.

13. In response to the government's request, INL provided a grant to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Rome to organize a study visit October 5-11. The purpose of the trip was for Kazakhstani officials to learn more about the measures being taken by Italy to combat trafficking in persons and, in particular, to provide victim assistance and protection. One of the primary focuses of the trip was on operations of shelters.

WHY ITALY?

14. Italian legislation and the country's victim protection system have gained European and international attention as a model for the protection of illegal migrants' rights and as a best practice for combating trafficking. According to the annual Trafficking in Persons Report, Italy is a Tier 1 country that fully complies with minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and has taken aggressive steps to enforce its anti-trafficking laws, demonstrated sustained law-enforcement efforts to combat trafficking in persons,

and has effectively provided assistance and protection to victims.

¶15. The Kazakhstani delegation, consisting of a Vice Minister of Justice, the Chairman of the Criminal Police Committee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, a Senior Expert from the Migration Committee of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, the Head of the Department of Information and the Archives of the Ministry of Culture and Information, and the Chairman of the Union of Crisis Centers NGO, met with Italian representatives of the Civil Liberties and Immigration Department, Anti-Crime Central Directorate, and Police Force Coordination and Planning Office of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Department of Equal Opportunities of the Prime Minister's Office, the Carabinieri Police Corps of the Ministry of Defense, the Anti-Mafia Directorate, and the State Police of Italy.

¶16. Among issues discussed were Italian legislation on labor migration, immigration and anti-trafficking, victim identification methods and investigative techniques, human smuggling, the victim assistance and protection system, police force operational activities, interagency cooperation, and trans-national judiciary cooperation. The study tour included a visit to a shelter for victims of trafficking and meetings with shelter personnel to discuss shelter maintenance, sustainability, and psychological aspects of dealing with victims of trafficking.

¶17. The Italian integrated response to trafficking in persons and migration control through legislative and social measures was especially interesting for Kazakhstan, because Italy, like Kazakhstan, is a transit country and a major country of destination of trafficking victims from neighbouring countries.

¶18. Most interesting for the delegation was the issue of interagency cooperation and coordination of activities between governmental and

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non-governmental sectors. In Italy, the two sectors complement each other and seek ways to better cooperate on every issue, not just human trafficking. Because almost all anti-trafficking NGOs and shelters receive 70% of their funding from the government, both parties are working together. In Kazakhstan, even though national legislation allows the government to provide funding to NGOs, procedural and funding mechanisms have not been developed. As a result, few NGOs receive funding from the Kazakhstan government, and so cooperation between NGOs and the government remains minimal.

RETURN TO KAZAKHSTAN

¶19. Following their return, members of the delegation met with the Ambassador on October 16. The Vice Minister of Justice noted the importance of working with NGOs and the need to improve cooperation among government agencies. He promised budgetary and structural changes based on lessons learned in Italy. The government's 2009-2019 plan to combat trafficking will enhance the responsibilities of all agencies to combat human trafficking and assist victims.

¶10. A draft social-services law proposed by the Ministry of Justice envisions medical, psychological, and legal services and would create a crisis center in Kazakhstan. Though the draft law will cover all victims of violence and does not specifically single out victims of trafficking, standards to define victims of trafficking as victims of violence will be included. According to the Ministry of Justice, such a law will allow for broad interpretation and will provide the basis for assistance to a large group of victims.

¶11. The Vice Minister of Justice added that all materials received during the visit to Italy will be summarized, analysed and presented to an intra-governmental commission chaired by the Minister of Justice for further discussion and development of recommendations. Shelter instructions and manuals provided by IOM Rome can be used as an example that paves the way for replication and adaptation of such a model in Kazakhstan.

HOAGLAND